

WELCOME TO DEATH VALLEY DRIVER VIDEO REVIEW #116!

Hiya! This is quite the mixed bag- as we stay skeletal this time around as we anticipate the fabulous ALL LUCHA DVDVR in #117. Pete and Ray go back to the future with the WWF and the 91 All/ New Japan while Me and Phil say the FUTURE IS NOW- like a couple of grappling-addled George Allens- by showcasing the huge gaping swankness of BattlARTS and DDT.

Love it....

DRAMATIC DREAM TEAM 11/25/1999- handheld

(DEAN RASMUSSEN)

I'm KING of the motherfucking freaks and quite proud to be so. I realized this when I noticed that I am developing a grasp of spotting DDT and IWA Japan undercard wrestlers and am now able to identify them with hardly any help. This is the THIRD of the endless DDT reviews that will pepper this much-maligned and truly beloved video review until the end of time- as DDT is becoming a frontrunning promotion in the burgeoning Japanese Indie scene. Between the DDT Proper cards, the total DDT permeation of any and all Onita Pro cards, the recent forays into BattlARTS not to mention the presence in the amazingly sleazy IWA Japan, It's easy to notice and be exposed to the fact that DDT is the cusp of high-end Indie wrestling and most anything with a large concentration of DDT regulars is a tape worth seeking out. As for this particular DDT Proper Card, I was gonna write this last night but I forgot that my wife's bookclub was chatting with an author, so I just watched the DDT tape again and took some notes- which I never recommend because you get all up into the "List Of Moves" style of review and analysis which will putcha ta sleep PDQ, usually. These will be the basis of what I write BUT YOU CAN GO RIGHT TO THE SOURCE NOTES since I have a scanner and you can get closer to the bone and we can creat a CYBER-BOND through the NEW TECHNOLOGY. I want TO TOUCH YOUR PERFECT BODY WITH MY MIND. Yeah sure...

Diasaku/ Yasaku vs Tsunehito Naito/ Phantom Funakoshi: The hot ref is reffing and she will be Ray Duffy's childbride if there is a kind and loving God. Maybe it's the ponytail or the basketball jersey. She could use a couple sammiches for my taste, but the boys like her and think she is the bee's knees- so who am I to argue with someone's honest-to-God Joshi-styled Whitehead moment. :) Naito- who I was down on pretty much last time we all gathered around the warm glow of the wrestling video screen- is starting to stick out on these tapes because he has the cool technical way of doing Pro Style matwork- very stylized and expressive- as if he was trained by the Bros Malenko or their student Yuki Ishikawa. The budding grace is something worth keeping an eye, I'd say. I think the fact that he sold pretty well in this match is bringing him closer and closer to the tender embrace of my wrestling fandom heart. I think the problem last time is that he was trying to fight his true essence of Malenkodom but trying to acquire the Fighting Spirit of Manabu Nakanishi and that ain't helping nobody, friend. Express the true you, Young Tsunehito, and you will become the next Alexander Otsuka or Tetsuhiro Kuroda. Stay on the false course and you are wrestling Benkie and Osamu Tachihikari on the WAR Reunion show. Phantom looks less Ohtani-like this week but doesn't fear the ass-beating awaiting him- as Diasaku brings the Japanese Wrestling Stiffness in his spinning kicks right to the

motherfucking face and Phantom leans into most of it like a motherfucking champ. Motherfuck! To make it even worse for the suddenly man-sized Phantom Funkoshi, Naito- who is a big, thick, lummoxy bastard- dropkicks Diasaku to keep Yasaku from breaking up the Figure Four Finisher of Phantom's and actually lands right on poor Phantom's noggin. Phantom tries to figure out which seedy Japanese ring in which seedy Japanese promotion he is in and stumbles to his feet to try to take match this home before the hard facts of gravity take their toll on his crushed skull. Diasaku opts against the merciful quick pin for Phantom and decides to go all DRAMATIC~! on Phantom's ass and kicks out of a few pinning combinations until Phantom finally says, "Alright, Lou Thesz lay the fuck down already...." Phantom and Naito's theme song is that "Hey Little Lover" song that drives me insane for three after hearing it because I'll be at my computer at work- trying to save fibre optic cables and 8" high-pressure gas mains from being cut in two- and I'll start singing softly to myself, "Heeeey, little luvahh, heey, little luvah..." and I feel like a cretin, lose my concentration, phones lines are cut in two, air traffic control is rendered useless, thousands meet a fiery fate.... Ahh, who can fight it? Heeeey Little Luvah, Heeey Little Luvah....

(Sounds like) MAMOOOO ROSEEE vs (I'm thinking this would be a normally dressed) Teniechi Kacho: Kacho is the guy from last week who wears the Casual Friday garb and wrestles in a tie. Mamooo is lanky teenager with boxing gloves. There you go.

Nise Onita makes his prerequisite appearance on every Indie show that is held on the entire Asain Rim by showing up here and yelling at takagi. I hear Nise Onita has cancer and my have to retire. I hope I'm wrong. If I'm right, definately pray for the little freak.

ONRYO vs Kyohei Mikami: Mikami is really fucking awesome and Onryo is actually more than the Next Spectaculr Shoulder Separation Waiting To Happen- don't get me wrong, ONRYO has the nasty bump highlight reel that beats out Tony Rivera's Rookie Highlight Reel Of Botched Spots Of Sheer Death and is gathering ground on Psicosis's Career Highlight Reel Planned Spots Of Sheer Death. The difference is that ONRYO is really starting to develop other facets of his wrestling game, as he has been making the time between disfiguring face first plunges to the concrete much more interesting. Either way, Mikami proves that sometimes simplicity beats Elaborate Death as he shows up ONRYO's Springboard Plancha to the floor by getting Grody Phat Ass Air under a Piscada that was absolutely breath-taking in it's athletic grandeur and row-clearing force of impact. After this bone-crushing beginning that take it straight to Puerto Rico stylistically, working out of a standing armbar and working back down to the mat without ever hinting at Puroresu shootstyle or anything. Mikami gets it off the mat with his smooth as silk in-ring high-flying that ONRYO rudos like an undead Mister Condor- making the standing rana rock and sprucing up the already swanky deadly dropkicks of the hard-charging Mikami. they work this into a multi-layered array of totally swanky roll-ups as it all gets weird- the bell rings- as this goes BROADWAY~! after nine minutes tops. DDT can be baffling sometimes. This was still pretty cool. ONRYO is an up-and-comer and should acquit himself well at his ritual suicide at the Super-J Cup. And sooner or later TAKA vs Mikami is gonna happen and I will be suitably TORQUED!

Poison Sawada/ Naoshi Sano vs Shigeo Kato/ Mitsunobu Kikuzawa: Poison has the great Thin Lizzy/Humble Pie tribute band entrance music, so tonight there's gonna be a jailbreak. Somewhere in this town. Poison Sawada has a great American red.white and blue singlet to match his lingering Essence of Sam Houston that intermingles with his own trailertrash aura and makes for a real kookie vibe. Sano is the Sano of KNOCK OUT ME/GIRLFRIEND IS MONSTER T-SHIRT fame and is pretty good in an actual ring- as good as he is on the tumbling mats, working for the kneebar on Manhole Man. Kikuzawa is the Shadow WXCITO who is a good little slimy indie worker who brings his A-game for the challenge of grappling the lanky Texan they call Poison- and he also has an inspired sequence with the similarly garbed Sano. Kato and Kikuzawa are in the Moebius nWoish invasion faction, so they go the route of the Southern Tag Formula with Sawada being an even-more mullet-enhanced Ricky Morton. After the prerequisite HEAT SEGMENT! and HOT TAG!, Sano and Poison are Twin Houses Afire and make with the stunning flourish of fan-and-rules-loving offense, all of which is polished off by duelling WAR Specials with Matching Bridges. I AM CHICKEN, indeed. Kato has a swanky brain-buster that he showed last time but he doesn't whip it out here- as this is pretty truncated by Miss Mongol doing a run-in to cut short the valiant efforts of the Occidental Dynamic dudes as she gets to Michinoku Driving Poison to set up Sano getting Powerbombed straight to hell by Kikuzawa. As the epic battle closes out, the Nagano Nightmares take out the Kawasaki Cruel Connection and we- as fans of the Pro Wrestling- are just simply midcardedly delighted. Everybody then hops on the STICK~! in very fast motion.

Tanomusako Toba/Takashi Sasaki/ Nihao vs Yuki Nishino/ Asian Cougar/ Super Rider: This match is the BIG reason to get this tape because it basically just righteously kicks ass. Super Rider- who I have been maligned and who I have stigmatized for you- the future or current viewer of the fabulous DDT promotion- FREAKS OUT by making with the zany highspots to kick this motherfucker off, busting out the fearsome Tope that was Ciclón Ramírez-esque in its wreckless abandon. Nihao is still shootstyley and nifty on the mat. He and Super Rider ground the match at certain points by working huge batches of stylistically credible UWFi Lite shootstyle- and also kick the holy fuck out of each other and it's quite a spectacle of Indie Vestigial Shootstyle, all of which is a nice counterpoint to the major passages of Asian Cougar and Sasaki bringing fifteen flavors of superhot death to blow the high end of this motherfucker of the fucking map. Nishino is the guy that looks like Bob Starr of US Indie fame. Nishino is quite a decent worker and he opts to simulate Wahoo McDaniel in this, going all goofy with the knife-edge chops full in the face of flying kicks and the alluring promise of Cross-Arms Broken supplied by the shooty trio of the opposition. U-S-A! U-S-A! Meanwhile, Sasaki says, "Fuck the stylistic Odes To Mid-Atlantic Wrestling and UWFi. YOU DIE DIE DIE motherfucking DIE, ASIAN COUGAR!" and he then whips out his neck crackling powermove arsenal and Asian Cougar gets many, many vertebrae compressed from nasty as all hell Running Northern Lights Bombs and Crushing Jumping Knees Right To The Fucking Face. Asian Cougar says, "Eat it, Facial Hair Boy!" and the continued Legacy Of Asian Cougar's Most Preposterous and Elaborate Legdrop Situations and Combinations progresses at its petty pace- the pinnacle being exercised on the freshly back-broken Tanomusako Toba who is decapitated on the floor as Cougar drops the leg from over the top rope, a spot where Asian Cougar gets fucking HOMICIDAL air underneath the drop. Nihao and Super Rider take it all back to the mat after the

airspace over the ring clears out and it all builds up to Nihao hitting a hurtful Capture Suplex that led to lower grade German and Tigers with bridges and other higher impact move- as the Super Rider and Nihao section mirrors the high impact non-shootstyle shenanigans of Cougar and Sasaki. Sasaki goes back to hating and hating and hating Asian Cougar and after busting up Asian a while with more face-hurting kicks and back-bludgeoning suplex VARIATIONS, Asain gets a Transitional Counter in the corner, hitting a cool ass Somersault Plancha off the Turnpost. Asian Cougar goes for Jun Kasai-like Diving Headbutt but MISSES BY A MILE- allowing Sasaki to flail wildly as he gets all expressive and shit while procuring two La Majistral on Asian Cougar to get the win. The reason this is so cool is because it's divided neatly into two stylistic similar rivalries- all of which are put together in such a way as to keep the match seamless despite the highly varying styles being established psychologically, thus the high-flying and high-impact of Cougar and Sasaki kicks in to take you logically off the mat where Nihao and Super Rider have gotten as far as they can with their designated style at that moment. Nihao and Super Rider pick back up after the Cougar and Sasaki sections have met a logical, bone-crushing end. Thus, taking it back to the mat in an interesting way is the perfect way to set up the finish as Cougar and Sasaki complete the attempted homicide. Meanwhile Toba and Nishino attempt to crack the veneer of the psychology of the match by having a striking section that could be sandwiched between the other two major psychological structures of the match, but Super Rider and Nihao strike harder, and Sasaki and Cougar sections are SO high impact that by half way through the match both Toba and Nishino settle into support for setting the larger mechanics of the match put forth by the other four. Either way, it's deul prong attack that you usual don't get from an indie match- as it's kinda like you took the stiff submission wrestling of BattlARTS and heightened their recent experiments with high-end high-flying. So you should definately know that THIS MATCH IS THE MOTHERFUCKING SLEAZY INDIE BISCUITS, TENDER COMRADES.

Sanshiro Takagi/ Exciting Yoshida vs Koichiro Kimura/ Masao Orihara: This match pretty much sucked for a lot of reasons, but it did show a glimmer of what could be a cool ass tagteam. If Kimura actually develops ANY kind of Pro Style skill and psychology, he and Orihara would make a GREAT ass-stomping heel tagteam. Orihara as the powerguy in the Tonpahi Machine guns isn't NEARLY as cool as gigantic ass-stomper Koichiro Kimura assuming the position as ass-stomper and it allows Orihara to concentrate on being a little bastard- all of which works amazingly well in the opening minutes of this match as Kimura and Orihara beat the life out of Takagi and Yoshida. After the inital flourish of dickishness, Takagi goes on the offensive attack and Kimura basically sells for a real long time. The problem is that while Takagi shows flashes of inspired power wrestling, Exciting Yoshida isn't really cut out to match anyone in this match in shootstyle or power wrestling, so he is left with weak looking elbow drops on the monstrous kimura and so Kimura looks weird selling them as much as he does. Orihara should have gone US Pro Style with Yoshida and played up to his strengths, instead exposing the the one-dimensionality of both Kimura and Yoshida by leaving both of them in their together for so long. Either way, Kimura gets either hurt or blown up and Orihara's brother has to run-in to set up large portions of the finish. Takagi blows some basic spots as there is confusion as they try to piece together an improptu finish and thus a proper build-up is non-existent and this match fades out to the finish. Not good.

GEt this for the ONRYO/Mikani and Cougar/Sasaki/Toba/ Naito/Nishino/Super Rider matches. Only the main event was somewhat disappointing.

!@!@!@!@ Socha's Best of Japan '91 Vol. 1

As is tradition with this, every now and then, I'm sent something which I am oblivious to the history behind which is bound to piss off as many people as possible when I review it and gloss over something that is well know. The tape is labled as being '91, so if the dates are wrong... blame Dean!

Stan Hansen v. Kenta Kobashi : Hey, Kenta didn't hear about the all you can eat shrimp bar at the Tokyo Sizzler yet. This is from Korakuen Hall. Kenta is young and stupid, so on a rope break, he slaps Stan in the face... which results in Stan going ape shit and beating the shit out of him with a chair. Kenta weathers the intial assault and works on Stan's lariat arm. This is '91 and head dropping moves aren't being sold at bargain basement prices so Kenta works the arm on the mat for a while. Stan fights back and works on Kenta's arm a bit before they do a brief brawling bit that Kenta (obviously) comes up on the short end of the stick on. Kenta gets near falls with a bulldog and a DDT off the second rope. Kenta barely is able to lift him up, but slams Hansen down and hits the moonsault for another 2. Kenta's frustrated and takes it to the floor briefly. When he's back in, Stan drops him with a few elbows. Kenta goes for an sleeper, but Stan drives him into the buckles. Kenta blocks one lariat attempt with a drop kick, but runs into another for a pin. By today's standards, nothing spectacular, but no real flaws.

Akira Hokuto v. Manami Toyota : Toyota is the All Pacific champ in this (the White Belt). Both women are all beat up, with Hokuto's arm in a cast that's up above her elbow as well as her knee taped up and Toyota's knee is all taped up. I'm sure it's working hurt like this that did wonders for the longevity of women's wrestling careers. Toyota spends a good part of the match, ripping the tape and cast off of Hokuto's arm as Lioness Asaka calling the action in the booth. Toyota works over Akira's arm. The ref tries to hold back Toyota as the seconds (including the short haired Mita) check on Hokuto on the floor. Hokuto is able to stun Manami and get in a twin spin kicks off the ropes, but Toyota goes right back to work on the arm. Toyota gets in a pescado to the floor, but when she goes for a plancha off the post, she finds nothing but seconds. Hokuto gets in her somersault dive off the post in. When they return to the ring, Akira works a half crab on Toyota's bad leg. Toyota rallies back with some drop kicks, but gets caught up top. Hokuto slips as Toyota is taken over on the superplex which could have been real bad. Toyota recovers first and goes after the arm. Hokuto's partner, Suzuka Minami, is on the apron with the towel, but Akira makes it to the ropes on her own. Toyota gets near falls following a moonsault and a Tiger Suplex. Toyota misses another moonsault and Akira rallies with a top rope drop kick and a german suplex for two, but she misses another dive and Toyota put the armbar again. This time the towel is thrown in. As a display of guts, it was up

there, but the flip side of the coin is that Akira probably had no business being in the ring that night and I didn't exactly enjoy watching this.

Jungle Jack v. Kyoko Inoue/Bull Nakano : Double Hair match : Hey, the scissors are out, hair is flyin', people are getting stabbed in the head! Kyoko is even thinner than Kobashi! Aja and Bull go toe to toe for a bit, Bison comes in but Bull isn't selling any of her running chops. Kyoko comes in and is all spunky (the codeword for someone who's going to be pummelled for their team). Aja and Bison get their heat on Kyoko for a bit. Bull gets the hot tag and she in turn chokes Bison for hurtin her little buddy. Aja gets the tag in and bends her can on Bull's head. Aja drops Bull after several urakens, but Kyoko breaks up the pin. Aja tries for another uraken but eats one of her own. Bull and Aja take turns cutting the other's hair. Aja jabs both Bull and Kyoko in the head with the scissors. They brawl out on the floor, when they come back in a pole and a overgrown nunchuku thing are used. This is gets pretty garbage-riffic as they choke out each others with chains and do the "walk them around the building type browling." We get a second helping of double hair chopping with Bison and Bull. The weird part is the match goes from total clusterfuck back to almost a regulation tag match relatively easily. Bull hits a pretty nasty powerbomb on Bison that folds her up pretty nastily. Bison is able to tag out and Aja runs over Bull with two Aja attacks, but runs into a lariat on the third. Kyoko coves in a scores near falls with her run up the ropes elbow and a german suplex before getting run over. Bison and Bull are tagged in. Bull sells briefly before Aja and Bison miss and uraken and chop respectively. Bull beats on Bison with the nunchuku. It seems like Kyoko runs out of steam at some point in here as she blows her spring back elbow spot once and lands mostly on the floor when diving off Bull's shoulders to the floor on Bison. Bull hits the top rope leg drop once but Aja's there for the save. The Jack try to rebound by whipping Bull and Kyoko into each other, but Kyoko does her rebound elbow by jumping off Bull into Aja, knocking her to the floor. Bull drops Bison with an uraken. They set up the top rope leg drop for a second time and Jungle Jack earns themselves some haircuts. If there is ever a picture put next to the definition of "Pissed Off", it's the face of Aja Kong as she sits in the chair getting her head shaved. This match is great to watch with a non-wrestling fan just to get their reaction as they shave off all of Bison's long hair. I have seen this match before as it's on just about everyone's comp tape in one volume somewhere.

Toshiaki Kawada v. Akira Taue : Perhaps the biggest laugh out loud moment of all this... spotting Taue's giant hair. They go right at each other on the floor, in the ring briefly and then back out to the floor with Taue hitting the lumpy tope. They brawl out on the floor a bunch more, with Kawada busting Taue open with some rams into the rail and flattening his hair with some chairshots. Taue works on one of Kawada's legs, ramming it into the rail once and then going after some leg bars in the ring. Taue gives Kawada a knee breaker on the time keepers table (seemingly a favorite of the Jumbo faction). Taue works a figure four in ring, then rams Kawada's leg into the post and goes after his leg some more with a chair. Kawada fights him off and works on his head with elbows and knees, before Taue takes him down and goes to an inside toe hold. Kawada fights back and goes for the powerbomb, but Taue is able to fight him off, hit his sumo thrusts and a DDT while standing on the first rope. Taue tries to press his luck

by going up top, but Kawada catches him, but can't hold him up when he goes for a slam. Taue's size also helps him when Kawada goes to powerbomb him, but Taue just lands on top of him for a near fall. Kawada catches Taue with a small package for a near fall. Taue tries to take out Kawada with headbutts, but Kawada weathers them and nails a enzulariato to score a flash pin. Finish was just sort of out of nowhere. Weird to see a blade job in All Japan... and Taue with giant hair. Post match, Taue gives Kawada a going away stomp.

Misawa/Kobashi/Kikuchi v. Tsuruta/Fuchi/Mighty Inoue : The fans chant "Tsu-ru-ta! *OH!*" when Jumbo comes out. This jumps into the action with Fuchi and Kobashi. Fuchi sells a few Kobashi chops to the face by staggering back to the corner. He deposits Kobashi to the outside and Jumbo gives him the earlier mentioned kneebreaker on the table. This spot is repeated by Fuchi as Inoue whacks Kikuchi with a chair when he tries to make the save for Kobashi. Grumpy old guys take turns working on Kobashi's leg and bending him in crabs and assorted toe holds. Kenta teases getting a tag when he reverses a Fuchi gutwrench suplex attempt with one of his own, but Fuchi holds onto him. Kikuchi saves Kobashi from another boston crab, allowing Kobashi to make the hot tag to Misawa who beats on Fuchi a bit, before Jumbo tags in giving the fans the hot match up. Jumbo eats some elbows, but reverses a Misawa flying headbutt out of the corner into a mat slam. Kikuchi saves Misawa from the pin attempt. Kobashi misses a top rope drop kick at Jumbo and Jumbo removes him from the picture. Kikuchi gets the hot tag and he flails away on Jumbo, getting him on the ropes and all. Kikuchi is spunky! And Jumbo HATES spunky... and thusly kicks him with a boot to the face and a lariat. Kikuchi gets handed off to Mighty Inoue. Inoue gets caught in a fisherman suplex, but kicks out. Kikuchi misses his diving headbutt and almost gets pinned following two rolling sentons. They have guys switching in and out with each teasing near falls with their partners making the save. Kobashi and Fuchi both play partner in peril, but eventually, Fuchi is stuck in the ring as Kikuchi and Misawa cut off Inoue and Jumbo and gets pinned by a moonsault. Fun match. Fun match.

Mr. Pogo/The Gladiator v. Sambo Asako/Atsushi Onita : Handheld : Hey, this is a best of '91 tape.... if Sambo, Onita and Pogo aren't blowing each other up... I don't feel the need to watch it at normal speed. I did watch this at normal speed enough to notice that Pogo came to the ring in cowboy boots, took them off to beat Onita in the head with and then wrestled the rest of the match barefoot. I guess this may have some importance because Goto saves Onita and Sambo from a beatdown at the end, but it's still Goto... so... hey, what's this button marked "FF" do....

Big Van Vader v. Tatsumi Fujinami : Vader comes out in his old armor, that's mic'ed so you can hear him grunting and yelling "VADER! BLARGH! VADER!" during his ring entrance. That armor thing ruled. Vader comes out wearing the CWA title belt, and this is for Fujinami's IWGP title. Vader whips off his mask to show "he means bidness" before we get underway. Vader controls early pummelling Fujinami with some punches, forcing him to roll out to the floor to get a breather. Fujinami comes back in and drops Vader with the punches of his own and gets in a backdrop suplex which pops the crowd. I think the parallel between Aja and Vader that makes them great monsters is that they can get away with

no selling from time to time because they're not afraid to bump and sell for you through out the course of the match, so even when they are getting beat, they've powerful enough to make you believe that they are truly badass when they go back on offense. Vader controls for a lot of this with his usual punches, forearms, headbutts,

Vader attacks, itdc. Fujinami rallies at one point with some flying forearms and a jumping kick that doesn't look like it hits, but Vader sells anyway. Vader bleeds following a post shot and Fujinami ramming him into some chairs in the crowd. Fujinami punches away on the bloody Vader, who fights his way up once before Fujinami drops him with more punches. Doctors try to check on Vader, but Vader kicks him down when he gets in the ring and Fujinami jumps right back on Vader. Fujinami gets Vader in the octopus hold, but has to give it up. Vader meets him with punches coming back in and crushes Fujinami when he attempts a sunset flip by sitting on him and then hitting a splash. Fujinami gets a 2 on a small package. Vader gets up first, Fujinami blocks on lariat but Vader immediately hits him with one from his other arm and follows it up with a running lariat to score the pin and win the IWPG title.

Jumbo Tsuruta v. Stan Hansen : Stan attacks right at the bell with brawling and has control for a few minutes from Jumbo stops him with a jumping knee. They work a side headlock sport for a while as Dan Spivey, now available for fashion shoots, looks on. After several failed attempts, Jumbo counters the headlock and works a shoulder armbreaker on Stan's lariat arm before working on the arm and taking it to the mat with some pin attempts while holding Stan's arm in a hammerlock. Stan and Jumbo exchanges chops and elbows. Stan fights his way up once, but Jumbo chops him down. Stan eventually brawls out of the armbar and uses some roughhousing to gain control. He takes it to the floor, elbows Jumbo on the apron and hits him with a chair. Stan hits a backdrop suplex for a 2. Stan drops some big elbows, including 2 off the bottom rope for 2 counts. Stan goes for another backdrop, but Jumbo kicks off the top rope and both guys are down. Jumbo gets up first and catches Stan with a thesz press for 2 and a neckbreaker for another two. Jumbo slams stan and hits a diving jumping knee for another near fall.

Jumbo hits a lariat, but Stan absorbs it and lariats Jumbo, mostly in the face, which Jumbo foot saves at 2. They have a small package reversal spot with each getting a near fall. Jumbo dodges a Stan lariat attempt into a sort of pinning move that looked weird. Jumbo goes for a lariat but Stan stops him with a DDT for a two count. A shoulder breaker gets stan another near fall. Jumbo reverses a whip, but Stan hits him with a shoulder tackle to take him down. Stan goes for a lariat, but Jumbo ducks it and hits a jumping neckbreaker drop for the win. Kind of weird to see a match end with that move after years of seeing death moves. It's not really a move I associate with Jumbo, then again, I haven't exactly seen a lot of him. Post match Stan gives Jumbo a go away beating and takes off.

Thus ends Vol. 1. I was into the All Japan stuff that I saw. Early '90's stuff is new to me. Jumbo's a lot of fun to watch given his stiffness and his selling, plus it's fun watching him in with Kikuchi like the crazy little kid who's determined to take out the big bully even though he's totally out gunned. I watched the other 4 Volumes of the '91 stuff, so I'll go into those when I get to them.

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\$%\$%\$%\$%\$% Battle Arts Taped 12-25-99
(PHIL SCHNEIDER)

Takeshi Ono vs. Ryuji Hijikata: Surprisingly great match, as Ono has been adrift as part of the incredibly cool, but kind of crappy, Tonapachi Machine Guns. Ono's hair is now dyed blond and along with his normally gaunt appearance he really looks like he is banging junk. Ono has moved fully into freaked out tricky ways to twist someone's arms and knees off. My personal favorite was when he countered Hijikata's Fishermans buster attempt, but rolling through with an inside cradle kneebar. Hijikata hits some decent power stuff, but he is still a little New Japan Heavywiegthish for my taste. The end is pretty choice with Ono hitting a Falcon Arrow and a Rings of Saturnish thing for the tap out.

Minoru Tanaka vs. Tsubo Genjin: Yikes it's superworker Minoru Tanaka in a comedy match with a wrestler who has a genitalia based offense. If you always wanted to see a caveman bite Minoru Tanaka in the store (I am looking at you Tony Gancarski) pick this match up, if you haven't, don't.

Alexander Otsuka/Katsumi Usuda vs. Masaaki Mochizuki/SAITO: Weird stylistic clash in this match, as SAITO who is the most lucha of the Ultimo Dragon students gets thrown in with the very shooty Usuda and Mochizuki. SAITO has a bunch of submissions but the lineage is much more Dos Caras the Yoshikara Fujiwara. Otsuka fearlessly steps in and takes it to the mat with the young luchadore, as Otsuka tries to see how many times he can kip up in one match. Mochizuki and Usuda seem content to beat the crap out of each other, as they spend most of their sections kicking and punching each other right in the visage. The match was more fun then good, but Otsuka did a decent job approximating Blue Panther and Usuda and Maasaki kicked and punched with appropriate force.

Mitsuya Nagai/Mohammed Yone vs. Daisuke Ikeda/Mach Junji: Nagai is a RINGS expatriate who decided to move into the big leagues and compete in BattlArts. Not being familiar with his work before this, I was expecting someone to perform some deliberate mat wrestling and kill the pace of a standard BattlArts match. Instead Nagai comes out pro-style like a mofo, with a butterfly suplex, a tombstone piledriver and even an eye rake, its like he had been toiling in RINGS not wanting to be Rickson Gracie but desperately wanting to be Dick Slater. This match was hit and miss, Yone wasn't afraid to suck ass, as he is turning into quite the 1997 Jinsei Shinzaki, as he moves from wildly inconsistent highs and lows. Ikeda was Ikeda, but most of the match was a HEAT SEGMENT on Mach Junji. Junji dropped the pink hair and was sporting a poofy brown perm, which made him look like a shootstyle Leif Garrett. Mach is about 37 pounds and is sort of a Puroresu Spike Dudley, in as much as he will take a horrific beating, but his offense is comical. He does get beaten into my heart at the end, as he leans forward into a hellacious Nagai spin kick, which got the multiple rewinding and slow mow treatment from both me and Dean (The effect was amplified by

the teen idol hair flying back and forth.) Nagai and Ikeda didn't hook up much, but the little sections were all stiff and brawly and got me juiced for their singles match. The whole show didn't have a singularly great match, but there were plenty of little things that made it worth watching.

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\$%\$%\$%\$%\$%\$%\$ BEST OF WWF #1 (early 1981)

(ADORABLE PETE STEIN!)

Once again, Def Jeff Lynch (here's the plug- jlynch@telerama.lm.com) comes through with this 1981 WWF highlight reel. This is basically the Sgt. Slaughter Show, which I have no problems with since Sarge was King Of All He Surveyed back in this phase of his career.

\$5,000 COBRA CLUTCH CHALLENGE: SGT. SLAUGHTER vs. RICK MCGRAW: This is actually REALLY good as Sarge stirs the crowd into a froth before finally clamping the hold on McGraw, then they basically have the equivalent of that one RVD-Taz match where RVD fought for like 5 minutes before finally tapping out to the Tazmission. Here Rick bounces Sarge all over the ring before finally passing out, at which point Sarge CUTS A PROMO on Pat Patterson. This gets good later.

WWF TITLE: BOB BACKLUND vs. SGT. SLAUGHTER (Philadelphia): Here Sarge earns his pay by bumping all over the ring and making Bob's carry offense look super-deadly. And you KNOW you're a great heel when you're in South Philly and the fans are booing you and cheering the babyface. =) Sarge eventually juices Backlund after posting him twice, and the sight of him hopping up and down in glee after seeing the blood is worth the price of admission alone. Backlund hits an A-1 gusher here, but he reverses a whip and Sarge takes that crazy bump of his over the ringpost to the floor. Backlund follows him out, shoots him into the railing and sends him back into the ring, but in doing so Sarge beats the count and Backlund loses by COR. WWF Booking 101... champ loses the first house show match via screwjob du jour to set up the returns.

SGT. SLAUGHTER puts up an extra \$5,000 for Patterson to take the Cobra Clutch challenge. This gets good later.

TONY ATLAS interview: You can see Vince McMahon get all goo-goo-eyed as he invites Tony to strike a few poses, but here comes Freddie Blassie and his new charge to ruin Vince's fun. Hulk Hogan comes out in the RAINBOW cape, and you can tell he just got out of Memphis since he gets all ethnic on Tony's ass ("boy," "brown clown," "shine my shoes"). Brief impromptu follows until Hogan crotches Tony on the top rope and poses. Hogan was quite the decent worker back then so this is OK while it lasts, but people who say Sid has the worst punches ever needs to see more of Tony's matches. OK, maybe they don't...

SGT. SLAUGHTER-PAT PATTERSON INTERVIEW, take 3: Game On! Patterson finally takes the challenge after Sarge slaps him, and is just about to break the hold when Sarge knees him

in the gut and juices him with a chairshot. Sarge reapplies the hold and HERE COMES THE CAVALRY! Tony Garea, Rick Martel, Dominic Denucci... "no, we need the cavalry here! Who called you clowns in?" Denucci lays in some dainty chair-shots and Gorilla Monsoon finally hustles Sarge to the back. I should note that Sarge has the Grand Wizard as his manager (wearing the SWANK "soul brother" disco hat as opposed to the turban), which I can't really understand since he doesn't interfere in anything and Sarge does all of his own talking. This gets good later.

SGT. SLAUGHTER vs. ANDRE THE GIANT (MSG): I know, I know... you see "Slaughter vs. Andre" and you start licking your chops envisioning the bumpage to follow. Once again Sarge mortgages his future by becoming a human pinball for his opponent... at one point he drops Andre and heads up to do the Slaughter Cannon, but Andre press-slams him off the top and Sarge gets so much hang-time that I was afraid he was gonna get wrapped up in the Red Holzman pennant hanging from the ceiling. The ref gets bumped after Sarge pulls him into Andre's path and Sarge gets DQ'ed at 7:58.

TONY ATLAS vs. HULK HOGAN (MSG): Quickie last match of the MSG show to send the crowd home happy as Atlas does the poses, absorbs some punishment, comes back with the "angry Brotha house o'fire" schtick and pins Hogan after straddling him on the ropes. MSG 201. Postmatch Hogan slams Dick Kroll and gives him the LEG DROP OF DOOOOOOOOOOMMMMM back when it was basically the setup for the lariat or the bearhug.

WWF TAG-TEAM TITLE: MOONDOGS REX & KING vs. RICK MARTEL/TONY GAREA: Funny to see Martel and Garea get the big-ass girlie pop as they hit the ring, but they're getting booed out of the building by the guys in Allentown or Hamburg or wherever this was taped. Moondogs work over Martel for a long time before Garea gets the hot tag (doesn't that just *sound* pathetic?), but the ref gets bumped, King hits Garea with the bone and makes the cover. New champs! Other than the spectacle of seeing titles switch on the syndie show, not much else going here.

HULK HOGAN vs. ANDRE THE GIANT (Philadelphia): Anyone want to tell me who used to announce the WWF Philly shows for PRISM so I know who to choke next time I'm in town? This match is great because the ref is the ORIGINAL Extreme Official, Dick Woehrle (as Rev Ray once told me, "You know the ref's a bad-ass when *he* wears wrestling boots..."), and he literally does nothing but sit on the ropes in the all-black Joe Higuchi ensemble while bull moose Hogan and Andre whale away on each other. Hogan actually slams Andre at one point and, even more incredibly, HE SELLS THE EFFORT! Later on with both guys on the mat, Andre gives Hogan this MASSIVE smack to the face that had me actually feeling sorry for Hogan for about a half-second. Andre eventually pulls off Hogan's elbowpad and juices him with a huge clothesline- Announcer: "It's LEGALIZED MURDER!" Yes! Open season on crappy announcers! Where do I get my license? Hogan comes back with a desperation kick, but he can't pick up Andre for the second slam and gets smothered by Andre's bulk for the pin at 12:51. Fun stuff... I have no problems with Hogan during this timeframe since he was still prone to actually working reasonably hard during a match.

More WWF in DVDVR 118 once we get past the luchathon next ish...

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THEME OF THE WEEK: BAD WRESTLER(S), GOOD MATCH

MASCARA CONTRA MASCARA: RAYO DE JALISCO JR. vs. CIEN CARAS (9/21/90, Arena Mexico)- (PETE STEIN): No, I haven't lost my mind. These are two of the worst wrestlers ever to get a sizable push and yet I'll be damned if they didn't go out here and work a hell of a match, perhaps the most important mask match in the history of Mexico. This has my personal favorite match opening ever as Rayo isn't even through the ropes yet when Cien absolutely C R U S H E S him with a mariachi guitar to the head. Rayo struggles back in but the first fall is academic as Cien gives him a leisurely thrashing and beats him with an upside-down bearhug that would probably be banned in several Southern states. Cien starts the second fall off with a blind foul on Rayo and garbage starts flying in from all corners of the arena. Rayo tries to come back but Cien cuts him off with one punch. Cien spends too much time playing to the crowd and Rayo comes back with a HUGE diving lariat and a dropkick that sends Cien outside. Back inside Rayo misses a flying cross-chop, but as Cien comes off the ropes Rayo hits a headbutt and follows with the BEYOND-lame Topes De Jalisco (think "Garvin Stomp" with headbutts) to even the match. Third fall starts with Rayo being whipped to the buckles only to land on the ropes and hit Cien with a surprise headbutt. He goes for the Topes De Jalisco again but this time Cien moves and Rayo conks his head on the mat. Cien ejects Rayo and follows with a pescado(!), but as he climbs back in Rayo takes him out and tries to slap on a silla de caballo (camel clutch) which gets reversed a couple of times. Rayo dropkicks Cien to the floor and hits him with a tope, but as he climbs back in he leaves himself wide open for Cien to slap on a Cavernaria. Rayo breaks it and whips Cien to the ropes, but as he drops down Cien cradles him and the two reverse back and forth to Godzilla-level heat from the crowd of 24,000 (in a building that seats 18,000... disaster in the making). Cien slaps an abdominal stretch and then a bearhug on Rayo to no avail. Rayo tries the headbutt off the buckles again but Cien ducks it and does the "jump 5 feet in the air and land on your opponent like a fruit" lucha pin for 2. Cien follows with a diving knee and jackknifes Rayo for 2, but Rayo sends Cien outside and hits him with this awesome- looking tope off the apron. Both men climb back in where Cien gets 2 off a tricky cradle. He whips Rayo to the ropes and tries to bodyslam him off the rebound, but Rayo small-packages him and the crowd goes BATSHIT as Rayo gets the pin to take Cien's hood. Cien tries to tease a walkout, but by now there are literally *thousands* of fans swarming ringside and this would be an extraordinarily stupid move to try, so Cien rudos it up in the ring for a bit before Rayo finally unmask him ("Carmelo Reyes, really old, from Lagos De Moreno, Jalisco"). Cien beats a hasty retreat through the jeering mob while Rayo sucks down a couple of Coronas before getting carried out. Seriously, this was a great match. EMLL must've had snipers up on the roof with orders to fire at will if these two didn't put out an effort...

Rey Mysterio Jr. v. Misterioso – Mask v. Mask 5/16/97- (PHIL SCHNEIDER): Misterioso may have been a good luchadore at one time , he seems to have some faded athleticism and some

with a really nice springboard rana roll up (which he had really stopped using at this point, which belays the importance of the match.) Really nice lucha match, which thankfully didn't have the stench of Konan all over it, this wasn't all Rey, Misterioso held his own for once, and when you watch him perform like this, you really bemoan his normal suckassness. Don't do drugs kids.

NEXT WEEK: CMLL JAPAN! EMLL! FULL! AAA! UWA! LUCHA MEXICO! LUCHA PUERTO RICO! LUCHA PANAMA! LUCHA! LUCHA! LUCHA! THE GIGANTIC ALL LUCHA DEATH VALLEY DRIVER #117! WE'RE CLEANING HOUSE. WHIP ASS!

THE DEATH VALLEY PLAYBOYS.

^^*^*^*^*^*

And now I'm drinking until you don't exist

I'm just crazy about you

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home

